

Helping learners put their best foot forward

Issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

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According to a recent UNICEF report, 11.9 children live in income poverty in South Africa, which for many means new school shoes are unaffordable. These same children are expected to walk long distances to school, often over rough terrain such as gravel roads or footpaths. Those who do have shoes, often have ones that do not fit correctly, are either too small or too big, with worn-out soles or broken buckles.



Grade 8–11 learners at the Bhekinhuthuko Secondary School, along with their educators, were thrilled to receive the donation of a brand-new pair of school shoes. The donation, sponsored and co-ordinated by Sumitomo Rubber South Africa and the company's suppliers, will see 1,670 school children from two high schools in the Ladysmith area, attend school with pride next year.

Recognising the importance of correct fitting and comfortable shoes for learners, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (Sumitomo Dunlop) pledged R150,000 and appealed to the company's suppliers to assist further. As a result, a total of R280,000 was raised to equip underprivileged children in the rural areas surrounding their Ladysmith manufacturing plant with brand new school shoes for the 2020 school year. Partnering with Ntenga Footwear and Bhanas Wholesalers, the company delivered a total of 1,670 brand-new school shoes to 819 female learners and 851 male learners from grades eight to eleven at the Bhekinhuthuko Secondary and Steadville High schools on Wednesday, 4 December.

"Shoes are recognised as a symbol of pride in many communities and cultures. Children are often teased or miss school due to the lack of, or poor condition of their shoes, especially in the cold winter months," says Riaz Haffjee, CEO Sumitomo Dunlop. "Education is one of our key CSI pillars and we work steadfastly to improve the outcomes of the learners at these two high schools. This campaign was a part of our continued support."



“Earlier this year Sumitomo Dunlop donated a fully equipped classroom to our school, providing our matric learners with an excellent environment in which to learn and prepare for their final examinations. Our learners and their families are going to be so incredibly grateful for these shoes,” said Bhekinthuthuko Secondary School headmaster, Mr Madonsela.

Head of Steadville High, Mrs Shabalala, said, “This is indeed a joyous end to 2019 for our learners. We are overwhelmed by this donation.”

Sumitomo Dunlop partners with the two schools to provide tutoring to grade 11 and 12 learners in mathematics and science, stationery and other supplies, hosting career guidance days, bringing in teams of staff from across the country to share their education and career journeys and encourage our learners to stay in school and strive for success.

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